

AMATEUR RADIO LINKED CANADIAN STUDENTS WITH MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION

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In April 2005 Amateur Radio made it possible to link students at schools across Canada with the Kanatek Expedition at Mount Everest base camp.

Students at schools from coast to coast had their mountain climbing questions answered by Professor Sean Egan of the University of Ottawa as he stood outside his tent in the early morning light at Mount Everest base camp.

Dr. Egan of Almonte was a friend with a passion and zest for life. As a kinetics researcher, he investigated fitness and aging. With his boundless energy and enthusiasm, he used every opportunity with students to promote the lifelong benefits of fitness. This remarkable radio project started more than a year ago when I learned that Sean was returning to Mount Everest as leader of the Canadian Kanatek Expedition. His personal goal was to reach the summit.

Sean agreed that speaking with students from Mount Everest would be a great way to connect with schools by Amateur Radio. He also thought it was important to promote wellness, fitness,

setting a goal, making a plan, and working as a team — the same values teachers promote in classrooms across the country. What started as an idea for students at R. Tait McKenzie Public School, here in Almonte, Ontario developed into a national project. With the approval of Industry Canada, and the support of participating schools in the Radio Amateurs of Canada (RAC) Youth Education Program (YEP), a unique opportunity was created to connect students across the country by Amateur Radio with Professor Egan on Mount Everest.

On Monday night, April 11 at 8:15 pm EDT, students, parents and community guests at six schools from coast to coast were listening by Amateur Radio for a signal from Mount Everest. It was 6:00 am in Nepal, Tuesday morning April 12. At base camp the sun still wasn't up yet. Here in Almonte, an audience of more than 250 people whispered and stirred in our school gym as the TV crew set up and the clock approached contact time. Then, before we knew it, there was Professor Egan's voice all the way from Mount Everest. Contact time!

One at a time, ten students at R. Tait McKenzie Public School, from Kindergarten to Grade 8, took turns stepping



After the successful Amateur Radio contact with Professor Sean Egan at Mount Everest base camp, all 10 participating students from Kindergarten to Grade 8 at R. Tait McKenzie Public School in Almonte, Ontario, gathered on stage with teacher Neil Carleton, VE3NCE.

up to the microphone and asking Dr. Egan a question about his climbing adventure. Everyone in our gym listened intently to hear his answers as the sky slowly lightened at base camp. Before we let him go, I had the audience give a dramatic cheer to let him know that everyone here in his home town of Almonte was very proud of him.

After the R. Tait McKenzie questions, starting in Halifax and working westward across Canada to Vancouver Island, students at each of the other participating schools took turns asking Professor Egan questions. It was really exciting to follow the conversations from the Atlantic coast to the Pacific. Through the wonders of Amateur Radio, we were linked across the country with Mount Everest on the other side of the world. Wow!

Our unique cross country contact with Dr. Egan at Mount Everest was called "Yakkin With Sean". Each participating school received a magnificent "Yakkin" display banner from the expedition sponsor, Kanatek Technologies Inc., that featured images of Mount Everest, yaks, Sean, and the logo of the Radio Amateurs of Canada Youth Education Program. Participating schools also received Kanatek Expedition lapel pins, as well as

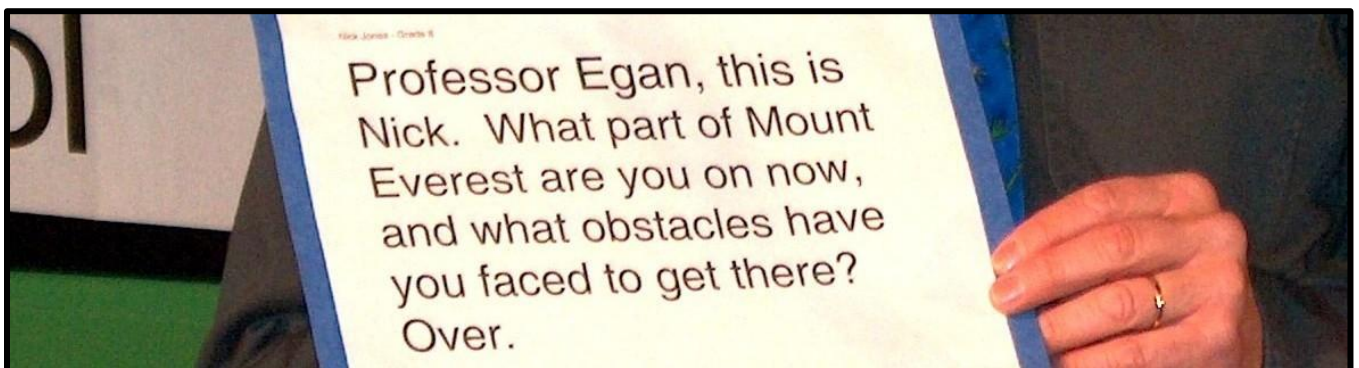
commemorative hockey pucks to celebrate the world's highest hockey game that would be played above base camp by the Kanatek team on the Khumbu glacier at Mount Everest. Details about the Kanatek Expedition, including all the daily blogs from base camp, are available at www.kanatek.com/everest.

Viewers around the world were able to watch and listen to the event at R. Tait McKenzie Public School. With thanks to Storm Internet, for donating a high speed wireless connection, the volunteer team of the Almonte Radio Repeater League (ARRL) transmitted our program live on the Internet. Special thanks to ARRL volunteers Bob Clermont, VE3AKV, Phil St. Germain, VE3CIQ and Dale Hennigar, VE3XZT.

Taking part in this unique experiment were, from east to west, Sir John A. MacDonald High School, Halifax, Nova Scotia; Grand Manan Community School, Grand Manan, New Brunswick; R. Tait McKenzie Public School, Almonte, Ontario; Walter Murray Collegiate Institute, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; Chestermere Lake Middle School, Chestermere, Alberta; and Drinkwater Elementary School, Duncan, British Columbia. A big thanks goes to the many



Grade 2 student Carlin, at R. Tait McKenzie Public School in Almonte, Ontario, at the microphone with teacher Neil Carleton, VE3NCE, asking Dr. Sean Egan by Amateur Radio how cold it is on the other side of the world at Mount Everest base camp.



Students made satellite contact with Mt. Everest expedition

Phillip Ambroziak
Associate editor

"It was a wonderful way to reach out and bring the world back into our school and to other schools across the country."

Those were the words of R. Tait McKenzie Public School teacher Neil Carleton when describing last Monday night's (April 11) satellite contact, which was made between the school and Almonte resident Professor Dean Egan, who is currently leading an expedition to Mt. Everest in the country of Nepal. While the more than 250 people who packed the school's gymnasium were eager to witness the contact, the project became even more unique when five other schools were able to join the conversation through the use of amateur radio.

"Even though we weren't able to have a live telecast from Mt. Everest (as was originally planned, but could not take place because of technical reasons), we were able to get a satellite phone call from Professor Egan," Carleton explained. "That conversation was heard across



R. Tait McKenzie Public School Grade 2 student Carlin Hennebury joined teacher Neil Carleton in making satellite contact with the Mount Everest expedition in Nepal last week.

PHILLIP AMBROZIAK ~ THE ALMONTE GAZETTE

said. "We were talking to tomorrow - they were already in the future."

During the contact, 10 students from R. Tait had the opportunity to ask Egan prepared questions about his Mt. Everest adventure. While some of the responses were choppy and unclear at times, all questions were answered and the connection was better established as the conversation progressed. Among

aerobic type training - a lot of walking and running, which all you kids should be doing. You have to be in extremely good physical shape."

He also noted that the team members are well dressed and protected, but that the higher they climb, the stronger the wind becomes.

"We're well trained and we hope for the best," he said.

As for breathing, Egan

students were breathing in Almonte. Because of this, the team has to climb the mountain slowly in order to adjust to the altitude changes.

Following the R. Tait students' questions, Carleton and all participating students gave Egan a big thank you.

"It's good to talk to the people in Almonte - keep sending me your messages," he replied.

Egan then proceeded to

"There was a recording made by the school in Halifax, so hopefully we will be able to make that available to students and families soon," Carleton said. "We also hope to make a CD with photos from the expedition."

Egan, 63, and Terry Kell, president of Kanatek Technologies Inc. of Kanata (the company sponsoring the expedition) are both Almonte residents and

has been to Everest twice before, but this time is preparing for a summit attempt next month. The two men began their quest March 25.

As for last week's contact, Carleton was very pleased with how the whole project came to pass.

"I'm so proud of everyone who took part," he said. "I'm pleased with the effort they put into it - it was a wonderful team project."

Students from R. Tait McKenzie Public School who had the opportunity to ask Egan questions were Rachel Van Woezik, Kassandra Whitby, Zachary Frew, Marcus Smith, Kylie Kendall, Nick Jones, John Reid, Alex Wilkie, Katie Hawkins and Carlin Hennebury.



R. Tait McKenzie Public School

